

CLEARCREEK

Carbon County

Mining
Class 6

A small logging and milling camp was located at the extreme southern end of Pleasant Valley in the 1870's and 1880's to supply mine props for the large mines around Winter Quarters and Scofield. The clear, cold stream flowing from the canyon gave the camp its name, although, paradoxically, the brook is named Mud Creek. After fifteen to twenty years of work in the area enough soil was scraped away to reveal high-quality coal right under the camp. Mine development began immediately and in 1898 the railroad extended a spur line from Scofield up to the mine. The high grade coal and easy accessibility made the product the cheapest coal in the state. The mine initially employed 200 men to produce 500 tons per day. The clear water was exceptionally good for power plant boilers.

In 1900 the Utah Fuel Company, a subsidiary of the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad, built twenty-five homes and duplexes, a hotel for 150 men, a store, hospital, schoolhouse, lodge hall, barns, workshop and water system. Many nationalities were represented, as with most coal towns. Most of the groups lived in their own ethnic areas but did at times socialize with the others. The Finlanders built several homes of their own plus a hotel and amusement hall on company land. The Mormons had a church building. Several families moved over from Winter Quarters after the explosion.

Heaviest activity was between 1910-20, mechanized

operations brought out 2000 tons of coal per day, the railroad ran two trains a day in and out of town and the population figure stood at 600. The mines were busy but the town itself was quiet, disrupted only by labor agents and agitators and itinerant gamblers preying upon the immigrant miners.

By 1930 the available coal in the vein was so deep that the long underground transportation slowed production and increased costs. As production decreased, miners were forced to leave and town population dropped to 250. By 1950 there were still 150 residents but the need for coal was off and many mines were shutting down completely. By the middle 1950's the mine had closed and almost everyone had left. For a few years the town was dormant and only fairly recently has there been an upswing in activity. The railroad tracks are still in place, threaded between ruins of mine and railroad buildings; the new activity has taken the form of a quiet summer resort area. Only four families live in town all year long, but in summer some of the freshly painted, trim houses are rented out for vacationers. The Alpine School District utilizes some buildings for an outdoor educational program.

This not very spooky ghost town of Clearcreek lies 5.5 miles south up the canyon from Scofield on paved State Highway 96.

References: 63, 72, 97.



In the 1920's Clearcreek hummed with the activity of 600 residents.

UTAH STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY



At the present time many of the old homes in Clearcreek have been repaired and refurbished into summer homes, although only a tiny handful of people still live here the year round. The old mine area coming into town is the ghostliest aspect of the place.